

The Bet by **TheMikeWheelers** (jasongracefully)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Multi

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers & Lucas Sinclair, Will Byers/Lucas Sinclair

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-07-26

Updated: 2017-07-26

Packaged: 2022-04-02 01:37:03

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,436

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Lucas and Dustin decided to make a bet, but Lucas didn't realize he was just using it to distract himself from his own feelings.

The Bet

It all started with the bet.

It was such a stupid bet, Lucas and Dustin were only 11 years old, they didn't know what they were doing. They just saw the way Will and Mike would laugh together, and talk, and work like a team.

Lucas, unaware of what he was feeling, watched with red eyes and a pit in his stomach he couldn't place. Did he eat something funny earlier? Yeah, that must be what it is. But he kept watching Will laugh at whatever joke Mike just cracked, and he was leaning over to Dustin.

"They're gonna end up together."

Dustin turned to him in complete confusion, not seeing whatever Lucas was, not having the same glasses of fear Lucas didn't realize he was wearing, "Nah, I don't see it."

"I'll bet you on it." His expression blank, eyes still fixed on Will and Mike.

Twenty dollars on the bet. Mike and Will were going to get together. It was simple.

For the most part, they forgot about the bet. It was occasionally brought up between the two within the next few days, but even then not mentioned much. It wasn't until a year later when their group of four had turned to five that it was brought up again.

Lucas couldn't help but notice the way Mike looked at Eleven, or the way he would hang back to talk with her while the other boys would walk ahead. It was obvious Mike had feelings for the girl, and Lucas couldn't stand it.

It wasn't right. He was supposed to win this bet, Mike was supposed to be with Will. Will needed to be with Mike, because if Will wasn't with Mike then Lucas wouldn't be able to stop thinking about how Will didn't have someone...

Then Dustin was nudging his arm, pointing towards Mike and El on the couch in Mike's basement, with El's head resting on Mike's shoulder, "How are you feeling about that bet now?"

"It's gotta be Will, It needs to be," Lucas said, mostly to himself.

His eyes drifted from Mike and El to Will on the other side of the room, he was lying on the floor reading a comic book. Lucas couldn't tear his gaze off of Will's smile, his heart beating faster.

What if he doesn't end up with Mike? *He could be with anyone...*

Then Mike and El went on their first date when they were 13. They went to the Snow Ball, and though Lucas didn't go himself, according to Dustin they were smiling and laughing the whole time.

Were they dating now? It sure seemed that way to Lucas. They were holding hands more, spending more time together, but that couldn't be right, Mike must like Will?

Dustin couldn't understand why Lucas was still so adamant about the bet, but frankly Lucas didn't either. He refused to confront his feelings about the topic, why he felt so strongly, he just channeled them all into insisting Will liked Mike, and they raised the bet to fifty dollars.

Thus began Operation Make Mike Jealous. Lucas figured maybe if Mike saw Will with someone else, maybe he would realize his own feelings. And who better to do it with Will than himself?

It started casually, grabbing Will's hand when Mike was in the room, ignoring the butterflies in his stomach and telling himself it was for the plan. That's all it was, just an operation. That's why he was holding his best friend's hand.

But then came the double date. Mike and El apparently saw all the casual gestures Lucas was making with Will (and Will was now shyly reciprocating himself) and asked them if they wanted to come with them on their date that weekend. It wasn't an official double date, but Lucas could tell that was exactly what they were implying.

He couldn't stand it. Why wasn't Mike jealous?! Why would he be

okay with Will going on a date with someone else?! He had to have feelings for Will, *he had to*.

Lucas stormed out of the room, all the feelings he'd been piling up for so long crumbling down around him, but the avalanche was interrupted.

"Lucas, are you okay?"

He spun around to see Will right there, walking towards him. He went to put his hand on Lucas's shoulder, but he brushed it off, he couldn't think any more about his feelings now.

"Why did Mike invite us on his date with El?!" Lucas spat out.

Will began to flush, his cheeks hinting pink, "I think, uh, he thought we'd be interested in a double date or something"

"Well that's just stupid."

It was blunt, thrown out into the air to turn it toxic, and did just that. Will backed up for a second, his blush fading and his face turning white, "What's bothering you?"

"Mike shouldn't have invited me! He wasn't supposed to accept this, he was supposed to get jealous!"

"What are you talking about?"

"Mike was supposed to get jealous of me! He was supposed to realize he likes you and I could win that stupid bet and prove it to Dustin!"

"You made a bet that Mike likes me?!" Will's face turned into a scowl, his nostrils flaring. Lucas never saw him get angry before, and he didn't like seeing it now, "So this whole time, you weren't even flirting with me?! You didn't even care about me? It was just some bet with Dustin!"

"Why do you care, don't you like Mike? Isn't this exactly what you want?"

"No I don't like Mike. and Mike doesn't like me! I thought there was

someone I liked who liked me back, but now I'm realizing that was all just a joke to him," Will's scowl was fading, but in its tracks left behind a distinct sadness that Lucas knew he normally hid from the world. A sadness filled with abandonment and feeling like he could never be good enough. Will began to storm away, stopping for just a moment to turn around and give one last remark before leaving.

"Why do you care so much about my love life anyway?"

Lucas stared at the ground, the poison in the air seeping into his lungs, guilt dripping through his veins. Will hated him now, that's for sure. He messed this all up over some ridiculous bet.

Why did he ever make that goddamn bet? It was supposed to be harmless. But that was 3 years ago now, and look where it got him. His best friend was mad at him and he had ruined everything.

Why do you care so much about my love life?

Lucas couldn't move his eyes away from the ground, tears welling up that he tried to blink away. Will's words were like an earthquake inside him, shaking him around and around and crumbling the wall he had build around his heart for so long. Will needed to be with Mike, that was what Lucas had been telling himself all these years. It *had* to happen. Because if Will wasn't in love with Mike, he could be in love with anyone.

Anyone...

Lucas needed someone for him to project onto that Will loved, because he was scared to admit that he was in love with his best friend, the boy who'd been by his side since kindergarten, the person who made his insides feel like goo. He needed to see Will loving someone else so he wouldn't ever consider the possibility of Will loving him.

"Will!" Lucas ran off after him, "Will!"

He began to sprint to find him, catching up to see the boy continuing to walk away, not turning to answer Lucas's calls.

"Will," Lucas huffed, out of breath from running as soon as he was in

front of Will, "I'm sorry."

It was then that Lucas saw the few tears that had escaped from Will's eyes, racing each other down his cheeks, "What do you have to say?"

"The bet was dumb, I shouldn't have made it. I'm sorry. I just, I saw you with Mike and figured you must like him, and then I couldn't stop obsessing over it, because I needed something to distract myself from ever considering that there was even a possibility you liked me." Will wiped the tears from off his face and Lucas continued, "I was scared and stupid. I'm sorry. I'm sure you hate me now, but I don't want to lose my best friend."

Will looked up at him and even with his puffy cheeks, gave a small smile.

"You could never lose me."